

Campaign Finance Reform

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Campaign finance reform is of critical importance, not only for this Congress but also the future of our system of government.

In 1982, the average race for the U.S. House of Representatives cost \$265,000, according to the Federal Elections Commission (FEC). Now it's approximately \$1.37 million, or an increase of 416 percent. Consequently, most members of Congress feel pressured to focus on fundraising, which takes away from the job at hand—representing constituents and crafting legislative solutions to the many challenges that our nation faces.

Despite appeals from citizens for campaign finance reform and assurances from Congressional leaders to pass such reform, significant progress has been lacking. I believe that in order to ensure that our government is truly “of the people, for the people, and by the people,” Congress should enact real campaign finance reform and put an end to the current practice of allowing elections to be bought by the highest bidder.

Legislation I Have Sponsored

H.R. 3859, Ethics in Foreign Lobbying Act of 2009: Amends current law to prohibit contributions and expenditures in federal elections by multicandidate political committees or separate segregated funds sponsored by foreign-controlled corporations and associations (at least 50 percent owned by a non-U.S. citizen or foreign national). It also sets forth ownership and operating fund reporting requirements and prohibits a foreign national from participating in the decision-making process of any person's election-related activities (such as those of a corporation, labor organization, or political committee).

The bill also establishes within the FEC a clearinghouse of existing public information regarding the political activities of foreign principals and agents of foreign principals. Amends the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended, to:

(1) revise foreign agents' supplemental reporting requirements; and

(2) provide civil penalties for specified reporting violations.

H. Con. Res. 13: Expresses the sense of Congress that the Supreme Court decision, *Buckley v. Valeo*, failed to recognize:

(1) that the unlimited spending of large amounts of money on elections has a corrosive effect on the electoral process not simply because of direct transactions between those who give large amounts of money and candidates and elected officials but because the presence of unlimited amounts of money corrupts the process on a more fundamental level; and

(2) other legitimate state interests which justify limiting money in campaigns, including the need to preserve the integrity of our republican form of government, restore public confidence in government, and ensure all citizens a more equal opportunity to participate in the political process.

H. J. Res. 13: A Constitutional Amendment that would declare:

(1) that Congress shall have power to set limits on the amount of contributions that may be accepted by, and the amount of expenditures that may be made by, in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate for nomination or election to federal office; and

(2) that a state shall have the power to set limits on the amount of contributions that may be

accepted by, and the amount of expenditures that may be made by, in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate for nomination or election to state or local office.

Legislation I Have Cosponsored

H.Res. 1275: Expressing disapproval of the decision issued by the Supreme Court in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission.

H.R. 1826: Fair Elections Now Act

H.R. 2894: Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2009